

14.53 hrs.

RUBBER (AMENDMENT) BILL—

Contd.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The House will now take up further consideration of the following motion moved by Shri Shivraj V. Patil on the 13th October, 1982, namely:—

“That the Bill further to amend the Rubber Act, 1947, as passed by Rajya Sabha be taken into consideration.”

The time allotted is two hours; the time already taken is more than 30 minutes; the time left is one hour and 20 minutes. Shrimati Suseela Gopalan.

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN (Alleppey): The rubber occupies an important place in the development of our industry. Our requirement of rubber is growing every year. Lakhs of workers and growers are depending on this industry. So, any decision with regard to this industry should be taken very cautiously. The proposal of the Government is to appoint a part-time Chairman to make the full-time Chairman as part-time Chairman; and then appoint an Executive Director under him. I want to know how it is going to help the industry, because so many problems are there. The full-time Chairman with all the powers has to deal with all these things. But now the Government feels that there are people in the private as well as public sectors who have so much knowledge about this industry. Now if they have to utilise their service—since the full-time Chairman is not available—the necessity of appointing a part-time Chairman and the Executive Director is felt by the Government. I can understand the Government's difficulty when the decision was taken. But now the problem is otherwise solved. Now there is no need for this Bill. This is going to complicate matters, because this part-time Chairman is going to delegate powers to the Executive Director. He will not take any initiative on his own. Most probably he will be an IAS Officer. Naturally, he will not be happy to work under the Chairman. He will only say that whatever is directed is done. The

part-time Chairman has 101 other things to do and he will not be able to deal with these problems in the way in which it should be dealt with. This move of having a part-time Chairman and an Executive Director is not going to help the industry in any way. The industry is facing so many problems. You know about the requirements of rubber itself. There is a lot of controversy going on. The growers are saying the estimated demand according to them is 1.97 lakh tonnes. The estimated production, according to the growers, is 1.75 lakh tonnes. The estimated demand by the industry is 2.1 lakh tonnes, but the estimated production by the industry is 1.55 lakh tonnes. According to the growers, again, 30,000 tonnes only is to be imported from outside. But according to the industrialists the demand is for 65,000 tonnes. That is admitted by the Rubber Board. The Rubber Board says that the demand is 1.97 lakh tonnes and the production is 1.62 lakh tonnes. The requirement, according to their calculation is 35,000 tonnes. But anyhow, the Directorate General of Technical Development officially estimated it as 45,000 tonnes. Already you have given permission to import 32,500 and odd tonnes by September and that has come to the market. What is the real situation in the country? What I understand from the growers is that the price has gone down to Rs. 11.

SHRI GEORGE JOSEPH MUNDACKAL (Muvattapuzha): It is even less than that.

14.59 hrs.

[SHRI S. M. KRISHNA *in the Chair*]

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN: From the papers which we receive it is Rs. 11. It might be much lower. When you import, the price of the imported rubber is going up to about Rs. 13 or Rs. 14 per kilo. Much valuable foreign exchange is being spent by the country and the commodity is being sold at a higher price. That is the situation today. No doubt, sometimes imports have to be allowed. But it should be done in a phased manner. The growers are saying

[Smt. Susheela Gopalan]

that the S.T.C. has imported the quota for June, July and August together. That is why the prices have gone down so much. But the industrialists want it according to their whims and fancies. You are importing rubber according to the demand of the industrialist. But one thousand tonnes of rubber is produced every day in Kerala at present. Out of that, only 200 tonnes is lifted. The rest remains unsold. What is the necessity of importing rubber in so much quantity when our production is so high? This is the attitude of the Government of India in everything.

15 hrs.

With regard of coconut, whenever the production of coconut goes up, you will import coconut oil and copra. With the result, suddenly the prices go down. Likewise, when the production of rubber goes up, at that particular moment, you are importing rubber. If there is much demand, we can understand it. Even then the import should be in a phased manner according to the requirement.

About the demand, growers are saying one thing, Rubber Board is saying some other thing and the industry is demanding something else. Why do you not appoint a committee consisting of technical experts to find out the actual requirement of rubber? The growers are saying that the industrialists give their demand according to their installed capacity, which is never utilised. Who is going to estimate all this? How are you going to find out the actual requirement? You should import rubber in a very cautious manner; otherwise, you will ruin the rubber industry. You are ruining lakhs and lakhs of workers and growers, who are solely depending upon this industry. How are you going to solve the problem?

According to the calculations made by the Government of India by 1990, 1.76 thousand tonnes of rubber will have to be imported. Why not we take steps to step up the production. The productivity in our country is very low? This productivity can be increased from the present 600 kg. to

800 kg. per hectare. In other countries, they are getting a production of 1500 kg. per hectare. Most of the growers are small growers. You have to give them more incentive to increase production. If they find that it is not remunerative to cultivate rubber, they will go in for other cultivation. If you want to save the valuable foreign exchange, you have to give more incentives to the small growers. You can give them inputs like fertilisers and insecticides at reduced rates. The rubber plantations are affected by a certain disease, which is widespread. Why can't aerial spraying be done by the Rubber Board? When the apple trees were affected by a certain disease in Kashmir, aerial spraying was done free of charge. Why do you not do it in the case of rubber plantations? A helicopter can be bought by the Rubber Board and aerial spraying can be done, because the disease is a widespread one and is beyond the capacity of the grower.

Even this year, within four months, the production of rubber has gone up by 6000 tonnes. These are the statistics given by the growers. And more plantations are coming up for cropping. Naturally the production will go up. If you give more incentives, our production will go up further. Also States like Tripura, Karnataka and Goa, where rubber plantations can be produced, should be encouraged to cultivate rubber plantations. So, steps should be taken to cultivate more rubber in our country. I understand that there is a new variety of plant which is grown in the Mexican desert. That can also be tried in our country. That should be developed. But, instead of increasing our own production, by giving various types of incentives to the cultivators, you are planning to increase the imports. In fact, you are making calculations as to how much you will have to import in the future years instead of finding out ways and means to step up production. You have imported the quantity planned for import in June, July and August together, because the industrialists in the country wanted it.

Merely appointing a part-time Chairman or Executive Director is not going to help you. That will only complicate matters, and that is why we are opposing it. The remedy

lies in giving more help and assistance to the existing growers and extending cultivation to other areas where it is possible. Attempts should also be made to increase productivity. These are some of the ways in which we can increase the production of rubber.

Whenever big industrialists make some demand, immediately Government acts on it. But when some reasonable demands are made by the workers, are you serious about implementing them? For example, the workers of Calcutta have been demanding the nationalisation of INCHEK and National Rubber. Why can't you do that? I understand that the Finance Ministry has approved it. It is the Industries Ministry, which is standing in the way. When the workers are making this demand for the last so many years, why not concede that demand? Why do you drag your feet? At the same time, whenever any demand comes from the industrialists, the Government acts immediately. This is the attitude of the Government. If these two units are taken over by the Government, the workers have promised to give their full co-operation for the efficient running of those units. Therefore, you should nationalise those factories without any further delay.

Let the rubber growers be given more incentives. You have to pay attention to the welfare measures for the workers. They are now being paid very low wages. The Minimum Wages Act is not being implemented in respect of these workers. You have to increase their wages. Some other welfare measures should also be adopted for them. If you do all these things, the workers will co-operate with you, the production will increase and there will be no necessity to import rubber from abroad. I will conclude by saying that you will have to change your policy basically in the best interests of the cultivators, which will also be in the best interests of the country.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN (Mavelikara): Since hon. Member, Shrimati Suseela Gopalan has referred to many of the relevant points, I will not repeat them. In fact, the object of this Bill is to change the full-time Chairman into a part-time Chairman.

I know the reason and, Sir, you also know it. In fact, I am not very much concerned whether it is a full-time Chairman or part-time Chairman; you can have whatever you like.

My objection is to the basic policy of the Government towards growers. I feel that the policy of the Government is detrimental not only to the growers but also to the national interest itself. This is so not only with regard to rubber, but also with regard to all cash crops which we are importing or exporting.

Whenever there is a demand from the side of industry for the import of rubber, immediately Government takes a decision to import the quantity required by the industrialists. That has been the history. I have nothing against industrialists. But I would tell you one thing.

AN HON. MEMBER: Why?

PROF. P. J. KURIEN: I have nothing against anybody. Why should I be against anybody? But what I mean to say is that when we are able to cultivate and produce a commodity in the country, why should we encourage its imports? One-third of the total land of Kerala is suitable for rubber cultivation of which thousands of hectares are used not for rubber cultivation but for tapioca cultivation. If the Government had pursued a correct policy, rubber production in all these years would have been doubled compared to what it is today and we would have been able to export rubber. Why are we not able to do so? Whenever the price of rubber becomes remunerative, the industrialists will pressurise the Government and the Government will succumb to their pressure and import rubber. Then suddenly the price of rubber will fall and immediately the growers lose interest and there is a decline in production. So, never in this country the rubber growers and those who are interested in starting rubber plantations were having the confidence that they can proceed with rubber cultivation and rubber cultivation will be ultimately economically viable. The Government is not able to give them this confidence that rubber cultivation will be economically viable. That is the only reason.

[Prof. P. J. Kurien]

why we are still in need of importing rubber. This is a wrong policy pursued in the country of Mahatmaji. We are speaking of self-reliance, but we have no long-term policy for self-reliance. Why don't you think on these lines that if a commodity can be produced in this country by giving encouragement, even if there is shortage of that commodity face that shortage, increase the production and let us be self-reliant? Now, what are you doing? You make a stop-gap arrangement. What happened recently? The price of natural rubber was Rs. 15 per kilo (*Interruptions*). Yes, it was Rs. 15 per kilo. The Rubber Board itself had calculated the cost of production of one kilo of natural rubber and shown it as Rs. 14 per kilo. That is the calculation by the Rubber Board. I have read it in some documents. Now what happened? 30,000 tonnes of rubber have been imported, the price of rubber has fallen from Rs. 14 a kilo to Rs. 11 a kilo. For every Kg. the cultivator has to lose Rs. 3. Why this price has fallen when 30,000 tonnes of rubber is imported? It is very simple to understand. Firstly, your calculation of the gap between the production and requirement is not on a sound basis or not objective. In Kerala alone I know there are thousands of hectares of rubber estates which have not registered with the Rubber Board and the production is calculated only on the basis of the land registered with the Rubber Board for rubber cultivation. So, your figure of the total production in the country is actually less than the figure of actual production in the country. Secondly, how do you calculate the requirements?

SHRI E. BALANADAN (Mukundapuram): They are calculating imports only.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN: Again, for total requirement in the country you presume that every factory has full capacity utilisation, but due to power failure or power-cuts or even strike and other constraints in the industry, it cannot have the full capacity production. So, on the one side requirement is inflated and on the other side production is deflated. Who is doing it? I say it is bureaucracy—whether it is S.T.C. or other people. They are showing this wrong inflated requirement and deflated production. They are showing

gap of 30,000 to 40,000 tonnes. If there is a gap of 40,000 tonnes according to calculation how can the price fall from Rs. 15 to Rs. 11/- I have one request to make. Before you arrive at the requirement, you should consult the Rubber Board and the representative of the Rubber Growers. You are consulting the industry. I have no objection to it. But in addition to industry you must consult the Rubber Board and the representatives of the growers too before importing.

I have to make another point—how to get rid of the present crisis? I understand, even now people have started cutting down rubber trees. This has been happening every time. When price is stable, there will be import and some people will shift from rubber to other crop and some will cut down the trees. This has been happening in Kerala and even in my Constituency. You must take some steps to prevent it. If the production is further decreased, we will have to make more imports at the expense of valuable foreign exchange. So, production at no rate should decrease. My suggestion is, as I understand, Kerala State Rubber Cooperative Marketing Federation have approached the Government and the Rubber Board that they would buy rubber at Rs. 14/- per kg. If they are given interest free loan. You can provide that loan from the pool fund of Rubber Board. They are having Rs. 20 crores as pool fund which is not utilised. Till last year this fund was utilised for spraying. Last year spraying was also stopped. Actually it had been stopped for the last three years. So, this money has accumulated there. The money is about Rs. 20 crores. To give interest free loan to Kerala State Rubber Co-operative Marketing Federation, the Kerala State Government, will stand guarantee. I would request you to give a loan of Rs. 10 crores to the Kerala State Co-operative Marketing Federation so that they will enter the market and purchase rubber at Rs. 14/- per kg. Such a step will save the present situation. If in any way you find that this is not feasible, I would request you that you entrust it to the Rubber Board to purchase this rubber at a higher rate. In addition whatever import is pending that should be cancelled forthwith. All pending

orders for import should be cancelled. Whatever you intend to import hereafter should be done after consultation with all interests. I do not want to speak more. But I want to give you warning. If you pursue this short term policy, that is detrimental to the whole nation. Production will not increase. There is a vast area which can be cultivated for rubber. But those areas are not tapped yet. The reason is, you are not assuring a viable and economic price to farmers. You assure that the price will be Rs. 15/- per kg. for the next five years. I can tell you Kerala alone will give you treble in the production—5 lakh tonnes of rubber within 10 years. If you declare like that, you will be able to export rubber instead of importing. That is what is to be done in the country of Mahatma Gandhi and by those who are claiming to be followers of Mahatma.

SHRI A. NEELALOHITHADASAN NADAR (Trivandrum): I do not want to say many words about the Bill because already the issue has been elaborated here by Shrimati Suseela Gopalan and Prof. Kurien, and Mr. George Joseph Mundackal is there to speak. He is an expert in the subject.

Mr. Kurien has pointed out that he knows why this amendment has been brought about. But in his present political position, he has not explained as to why this has been brought. This has been brought with a political motive because some leader of the Congress-I in Kerala has been selected by the Central Party Circle to be the Chairman of the Rubber Board. He does not want to become a full-time chairman because he may be deprived of his political office. But he is ready to become a part-time Chairman. So, only to suit him, the amendment has been brought forward here.

AN HON. MEMBER: He is a part-time Congressman.

SHRI A. NEELALOHITHADASAN NADAR: Now, he wants to be in the part-time job of Rubber Board. No doubt, he is a part-time Congressman. This is the reason—political motivation—for which the amendment has been brought forward here. (*Interruptions*). I am not going to name the person, here. Even, we know much earlier the new Governor of Kerala who is coming. That is our intelligence working against them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Don't be provoked.

SHRI A. NEELALOHITHADASAN NADAR: I am not provoked. I am speaking like this.

Now the policy regarding rubber is being dictated by the big industrialists. I am told by some friends who are connected with the rubber growers and who are looking after their industries—even the Minister can look into this statement—that most of the family members of the highest officials of the Ministry of Commerce are employed in the industries of big rubber industrialists. So, they are dictating the policy. Similarly, they are trying to influence even the S.T.C. regarding the import of rubber.

In the original Act, that is, the Rubber Act of 1947, Section (3) says:

“It shall also be the duty of the Board—

(a) to advise the Central Government on all matters relating to the development of the rubber industry including the import and export of rubber”.

[Shri A. Neelalohithadasan Nadar]

Similarly section 8B says:

"Before taking any action touching the affairs of the Board under this Act, the Central Government shall ordinarily consult the Board"

May I ask whether any import of rubber has been done with the concurrence of the Rubber Board or on the recommendations or approval of the Rubber Board. As I have pointed out the other day when I was speaking on the I.M.F. (Amendment) Bill, even the Finance Minister of Kerala has stated in his speech at Quilon that they are going to agitate against the import of rubber. It is some other Minister, the Revenue Minister. I do not know whether the Chief Minister has also issued the statement. So, this issue should be seriously taken note of.

Similarly, I am told that there is some lobbying going on. Because the STC is doing the import of rubber, the industrialists are forced to please some official in the Ministry and other people. So, the big business houses and multinationals are trying to have complete import of rubber in their hands. They are lobbying for that. Because of the changes in the industrial policies and programmes of the Government of India and because of the recent speech of the Finance Minister in the United States and other things, I am afraid, even this may be conceded to by the Government. So, the national and international conspiracy is going on against the rubber growers and our agricultural economy to adopt their policy which may suit the big business houses and multinationals in this respect.

Many other things have been pointed out by hon. members. The price of rubber which was Rs. 16 per kg. has now fallen to Rs. 10.50 per k.g. I request the Government to sort out some concrete programme to encourage small growers in the rubber industry. There are big growers and small growers of rubber. The small growers should be encouraged because they are completely dependent on the rubber plantations for their livelihood. The big growers may be having some other avenues of income also. So, I would re-

quest the Government to fix some limit for rubber plantations so that small growers are encouraged. There should be some limit fixed for rubber plantations. Such an amendment should be brought about under the land reforms. Already, the land reforms have taken place in Kerala. But the rubber plantations are not included. I would request the Government of India to use their good offices to have rubber plantations also included in the Land Reforms Act.

With these words, I conclude.

श्री बी. डी. सिंह (फूलपुर): सभापति जी, रबर अधिनियम, 1947 की व्यवस्थाओं के अनुसार रबर बोर्ड का गठन होता है। और अभी तक जो व्यवस्था रही है उसमें केन्द्रीय सरकार रबर बोर्ड के चेयरमैन की नियुक्ति करती रही है और उसमें चेयरमैन कोई आई एं एस भी हो सकता था और पब्लिक का भी आदमी हो सकता था। यह केन्द्र सरकार पर आधारित था कि किसको नियुक्त करती है। लेकिन चेयरमैन होल टाइमर होता था।

अब इस संशोधन के द्वारा सरकार का यह मन्तव्य है कि एक पूर्णकालिक चेयरमैन को न रख कर पार्ट टाइम चेयरमैन की नियुक्ति कर दी जाय और जो पार्ट टाइम चेयरमैन होगा उसकी सहायता के लिए एक एग्जीक्यूटिव डायरेक्टर की नियुक्ति की जाय। जो चेयरमैन के निर्देशानुसार कार्यों को करे। यह बात समझ में नहीं आती कि जब रबर उद्योग इस समय संकट की अवस्था से गुजर रहा है, उत्पादन नहीं हो रहा है, हम आयात पर निर्भर कर रहे हैं तो इसमें पार्ट टाइम चेयरमैन की क्या आवश्यकता पड़ गई।

होल टाइम चेयरमैन को 2000 से 2250 तक वेतन दिया जाता था। अब पार्ट टाइम चेयरमैन को क्या वेतन दिया जाएगा और एग्जीक्यूटिव डायरेक्टर की जो नई पोस्ट होगी उसके लिए कितना अतिरिक्त वेतन देना पड़ेगा? जिस अतिरिक्त

6ए-1 में यह संशोधन कर रहे हैं, उसमें रबड़ प्रोडक्शन कमिश्नर की व्यवस्था है। उसे भी सरकार नियुक्त करती है और 6ए-2 में एक सैक्रेटरी की नियुक्ति भी सरकार करती है जो समय-समय पर चेयरमैन द्वारा दिए गए निर्देशों का पालन करेगा। इस तरह से यह पार्ट टाइम चेयरमैन की और एकजीक्यूटिव डायरेक्टर की नियुक्ति की बात समझ में नहीं आती है।

जैसा हमारे नाडार साहब ने कहा, लगता है कि यह कोई पोलिटिकल बात है और शायद यह मंशा हो सकती है कि जो शासक पार्टी का मंत्री या अध्यक्ष हो वह अपने काम को देखे और इस काम को भी देखे। इसलिए मैं इस संशोधन का विरोध करता हूँ।

देश का रबड़ उद्योग इस समय संकट की स्थिति में है। लगता है कि हम रबड़ के उत्पादन में वृद्धि की ओर ध्यान नहीं दे रहे हैं, बल्कि इसके आयात पर हम ज्यादा निर्धारित हैं क्योंकि 1980-81 में जहाँ हमारा आयात करीब 9250 टन था, वह 1982-83 में करीब 30,35 हजार टन रबड़ हम आयात करने जा रहे हैं। इस तरह से दो साल में तीन गुना से भी अधिक रबड़ आयात करने हम जा रहे हैं।

1980-81 में हमारे यहाँ रबड़ का उत्पादन जहाँ 1 लाख 53 हजार टन हुआ वह 1981-82 में घटकर 1 लाख 52 हजार टन हो गया। मेरा निवेदन है कि विभिन्न प्रयासों के द्वारा हमें देश में रबड़ के उत्पादन को बढ़ाना चाहिए और आयात पर कम निर्भर होना चाहिए।

इसमें दो समस्याएँ उत्पन्न हो जाती हैं एक तो संभवतः हमारे यहाँ कास्ट आफ प्रोडक्शन ज्यादा है। मंत्री जी बताने की कृपा करें कि हमारे यहाँ जो रबड़ उत्पादित हो रहा है, उसकी कीमतें क्यों ज्यादा हैं? यह

कास्ट आफ प्रोडक्शन अधिक होने से हैं या उत्पादन अधिक न होने से हैं?

हमारे साथियों ने बताया कि रबड़ की कीमत केरल में 16, 17 रुपए है और दिल्ली में 18, 19 रु. है और आयातित रबड़ की कीमत 8 रुपए है।

अगर कास्ट आफ प्रोडक्शन ज्यादा है तो उसमें अधिक सुधार कर के कास्ट आफ प्रोडक्शन को घटाया जाना चाहिए और कम उत्पादन के कारण है तो उत्पादन को बढ़ाया जाना चाहिए। रबड़ के उत्पादन बढ़ाने के दो तरीके हो सकते हैं। एक तो बागान में इसका क्षेत्र बढ़ाया जाए और दूसरे रि-प्लान्टेशन की जाए। जहाँ क्षेत्रफल बढ़ाने की बात है, उसमें दो तरह के क्षेत्र हैं— एक ट्रेडिशनल-एरिया और दूसरे नान-ट्रेडिशनल-एरिया। यह देखा गया है कि ट्रेडिशनल-एरिया में क्षेत्रफल बढ़ाने की स्थिति सेचुरेशन प्वाइंट तक पहुँच गई है। ट्रेडिशनल एरिया हैं, जैसे केरल, तमिलनाडु और कर्नाटक आदि। नान-ट्रेडिशनल-एरिया में इन्फ्रास्ट्रक्चर की वृद्धि करके और बड़िया टैक्नालाजी की व्यवस्था करके रबर बागान के अन्तर्गत क्षेत्रफल बढ़ाने की व्यवस्था की जानी चाहिये, जिससे रबर का उत्पादन बढ़ सके। 1979 में तत्कालीन सरकार ने एक न्यू-प्लान्टिंग-सब्सिडी-स्कीम निकाली थी और उसको प्रारम्भ किया गया था, इस प्रक्रिया से इसके क्षेत्रफल में काफी वृद्धि हुई थी।

री-प्लान्टिंग के संबंध में ऐसा महसूस किया जाता है कि इसमें हमारी गति बहुत कम है। सामान्य तौर पर लगभग तीन प्रतिशत क्षेत्रफल में या सात-साढ़े सात हैक्टेयर क्षेत्र में प्रतिवर्ष प्लान्टिंग कर पाते हैं, जबकि हमारे पास 50 हजार हैक्टेयर क्षेत्र ऐसा है, जहाँ पर तुरन्त री-प्लान्टिंग की आवश्यकता है।

[श्री बी० डी० सिंह]

इस काम में करीब 44 हजार छोटे उत्पादक हैं और 70 फीसदी बहुत ही छोटे उत्पादक हैं। इसलिए उनमें विशेष सुधार की आवश्यकता है। इसे अतिरिक्त इसमें एक बीमारी लग जाती है और मानसून के समय इसकी पत्तियां झड़ जाती हैं, जबकि यह बीमारी श्रीलंका और मलेशिया में नहीं होती है। इस बीमारी से बचने के लिए पहले हैलीकाप्टर के द्वारा छिड़काव किया जाता था और सरकार सब्सिडी देती थी। लेकिन ऐसा महसूस होता है कि यह सब्सिडी बन्द कर दी गई है। पिछले तीन वर्षों से यह सब्सिडी नहीं दी जा रही है। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से निवेदन करता कि यह सब्सिडी दी जानी चाहिए और दवा के छिड़काव की व्यवस्था होनी चाहिए। इस बीमारी को दूर करके उत्पादन को बढ़ाने में मदद मिल सकती है।

इसके अतिरिक्त मैं जैसा पहले कह चुका हूँ कि इसमें 70 फीसदी छोटे उत्पादक हैं। उनको सहकारी सहायता के आधार पर प्रोसेसिंग और मार्केटिंग में सहायता मिलनी चाहिए जिससे कि रबर की क्वालिटी में सुधार हो सके और उनको अपने उत्पादन की अच्छी कीमत मिल सके।

इन शब्दों के साथ मैं अपनी बात समाप्त करता हूँ।

SHRI GEORGE JOSEPH MUNDACKAL (Muvattupuzha): I am first of all supporting the Rubber (Amendment) Bill. But I may point out the difficulties faced by the small growers of rubber. I am representing a constituency which is producing the maximum rubber in India. 90 per cent of the rubber growers are poor and marginal cultivators.

An estate means a big rubber grower. Only a few hundred rubber estates are existing. Nearly 90 per cent of the rubber cultivators own 1 acre or 2 acres or 3 acres and they are just working in the fields and are earning like the daily labour. I request the Minister to show some sympathy to the poor and marginal cultivators because my constituency has the maximum of rubber plantations in the country.

The first thing is that rubber was selling at Rs. 16 a kg because rubber production in India is far less. Now the Rubber Board has taken up a scheme for replanting as well as new planting and is giving enough subsidy. For the last 2 years so many farmers have taken to rubber planting on a large scale. But by seeing that the price of rubber has come down to Rs. 10.50 from Rs. 16 who is going to plant rubber? It is not a short-term cultivation. It is a long-term cultivation. We have to wait for 6 to 9 years to get the income. In the north if you are cultivating wheat and if the price is not good, they will take to paddy and if paddy is not getting a good price, they will take up groundnut cultivation. Like that they can change the crop. But that is not possible in the case of rubber and coconut—all these are long-term cultivation and it takes 7 to 9 years to get the income. Who is going to take the risk and who is going to invest large amount of money on these plantations?

In calculating the cost of rubber production, we have to calculate the cost of the land. If somebody invests money, he must at least get 8 to 10 per cent return on that. You must consider all these things. What happens now is that rubber was imported in the month of September which was the peak period for rubber production in India. In the peak production time, imported rubber is distributed. Now, nobody is there to purchase the Indian rubber. It cannot be stored for more than six months as otherwise it will be spoiled. Its elasticity will be lost. So, my request to the Minister is to find out a remedy to save the

one and a half lakhs cultivators on whom depend nearly three to four lakhs of workers in this industry. We are of course paying them the minimum wages as per the Factories and Minimum Wages Acts. Labour charges are the maximum in Kerala. I request the Minister to make use of the Rubber Pool Fund. As Prof. Kurien said, more than Rs. 20 crores are there in this Fund. You have to invest that money either through the marketing federation or through Rubber Board or through the STC. Purchase of the surplus rubber must be made from the market and that should be stored for consumption in the lean months. The point is that the purchased rubber should be distributed in the lean months to the factory owners. What happens now is that factory owners say they require more rubber. Rubber plantation is going on. But in one state there may be a power cut and in another State there may be a lock-out or strike. In the meantime rubber production may be going up. Before Independence, for example, it was 50,000 tonnes only. Now it has gone up to more than one and a half lakh tonnes. When plantation for production of rubber has gone up like that, I would request the Minister to give bonus to Rubber Board Staff. Why can't you give bonus to the staff of the Rubber Board like Coffee Board? If you give them bonus, they will surely cooperate with you. We lose a lot of foreign exchange. We can save that. As Prof. Kurien said, we can also export rubber in the near future. If only we assure a fair price for the rubber, in the next few years, there will be more and more of rubber plantations. The Rubber Board is encouraging the new rubber plantations scheme and, as a result, more rubber plantations are increasing fast.

Phyathora disease is there. About three years back they had stopped paying the subsidy for spraying. Subsidy should be given to the small growers. Large growers are not eligible for the subsidy for spraying. I request the Minister to continue the subsidy scheme. Rubber is to be released from the buffer stocks only in the lean months. What happens now is that imported rubber is sold in the

month of September which is the peak production season. That is why the trouble has come. The poor people are struggling for their existence by disposing of their rubber at lowest price. This is not a commodity which can be stocked long. I request the Minister to rush to the market to save the poor and marginal cultivators. I do not want to disturb the factories. The excise duty on lorry tyres and rubber products is very heavy. I request the Minister to use his influence to reduce this duty so that the rubber products can come into the market. Very cheap rubber is a foreign exchange saving commodity. If the production is less we are losing heavily this foreign exchange by importing rubber.

I request the Minister to rush to the market and purchase the surplus rubber to save the poor cultivators.

श्री जगन्नाथ पाटिल (ठाणे) :

सभापति महोदय, मैं आपका अधिक मसय नहीं लेना चाहता हूँ। कल से इस विधेयक पर चर्चा हो रही है। बहुत से लोगों ने चर्चा में भाग लिया है और कई लोगों ने कहा है कि पार्ट टाइम चेयरमैन क्यों रखते हैं, फुल टाइम क्यों नहीं रखते। इसका अर्थ इन लोगों की समझ में नहीं आता होगा। मान्यवर मंत्री महोदय जिस महाराष्ट्र से आते हैं, उसी राज्य से मैं भी आता हूँ। कई साल पहले महाराष्ट्र में एक महा-पुरुष हुए थे—श्री नाना साहेब पेशवा, उनको लोग "दीड़ शाहणा" कहते थे यानि वन एण्ड हाफ इंटेलीजेंट। तो माननीय मंत्री जी ने एक पूरा तो अपने लिए निकाल लिया होगा और जो आधा बचा है, उसके लिए पार्ट टाइम चेयरमैन रख दिया है।

आज इस देश का किसान चाहे वह ज्वार की खेती करता हो या बाजरा, चावल, गन्ना, गेहूँ या खर की खेती करता हो, कोई संतुष्ट नहीं है। इसका कारण सरकार की नीति है, जिसे बदला

[श्री जगन्नाथ पाटिल]

जाना चाहिए । किसान को संतोष मिलना चाहिए । ज्यादा फायदा न हो तब भी नुकसान तो उसको नहीं होना चाहिए ।

जैसा कि मंत्री महोदय जानते हैं कि रबर की खेती इतनी आसानी से नहीं होती है । ज्वार-बाजरा, 4-6 महीने में, 8-10 महीने में, गन्ना एक साल में हो जाता है, लेकिन रबर के पेड़ को तैयार करने में 6-7 साल तक लग जाते हैं और जब उत्पादन शुरू होता है तब सरकार की नीति अगर किसानों के पक्ष में नहीं होगी तो उससे देश का नुकसान होगा । आज केरल के किसान रबर के पेड़ उखाड़ कर अन्य खेती करने के बारे में सोच रहे हैं । इससे हमारा प्रोडक्शन कम होगा और हमें श्रीलंका और मलेशिया से रबर का आयात करना होगा । आज भी हमारा उत्पादन मांग के अनुपात में 60-70 हजार टन कम है, उसके लिए हमें 25-30 करोड़ रुपए की विदेशी मुद्रा खर्च करनी पड़ती है ।

हमारे देश की विशेषता यह है कि यहां पर हर जगह जिस चीज की चाहें पैदावार ली जा सकती है । केरल और तमिलनाडु के साथ-साथ महाराष्ट्र के कोकण क्षेत्र में थाना-रायगढ़, सिधु दुर्ग, रत्नागिरि और इसके साथ-साथ गोवा की भूमि में भी रबर की अच्छी खेती हो सकती है । महाराष्ट्र के एक किसान श्री केतकर ने रायगढ़ जिले के पड़घवली गांव में सैकड़ों एकड़ भूमि में रबर की सफलता पूर्वक खेती की है । कोकण क्षेत्र जो फलों के लिए, विशेषकर फलों के राजा आम के लिए सब जगह विख्यात है, वहां किसानों को अगर सही मार्गदर्शन

दिया जाए तो वे रबर की खेती अच्छी तरह से कर सकते हैं और इसका उत्पादन बढ़ाने में सहायक हो सकते हैं । मदद करें तो मुझे ऐसा लगता है कि कोकण में रबर की खेती आगे बढ़ सकती है और इससे देश को लाभ हो सकता है ।

मैंने शुरू में कहा था कि मैं ज्यादा समय लेना नहीं चाहता । मंत्री महोदय को मेरी पहली बात थोड़ा हंसी में लेनी चाहिये । जो अच्छे आदमी हैं जो टैक्नीकल एक्सपर्ट हैं उनको अगर फुल टाइम चेयरमैन बनाया जाए तो रबर बोर्ड का विकास अच्छे ढंग से हो सकता है, उस में मदद मिल सकती है ।

मैं यह भी चाहता हूं कि छोटे किसानों को सबसिडी मिलनी चाहिये और उनका प्रतिनिधि भी रबर बोर्ड पर होना चाहिये । साथ ही खेतों में काम करने वाले जो मजदूर हैं, जो रबर का उत्पादन करते हैं, उनका प्रतिनिधि भी रबर बोर्ड पर होना चाहिये ।

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE

(Panskura): Sir, enough has been said by the hon. Members on the Rubber (Amendment) Bill, 1982. I support the idea expressed by Shrimati Suseela Gopalan. In this connection, I have only to say that taking advantage of the discussion on Rubber Board, through the Commerce Minister, I request the Minister for Industry to nationalise the National Rubber Company which has already been taken over by the Government. It is no use wasting money on that after it is taken over and keeping it in that way for a long time. So also, the Incheck Tyre Company should also be nationalised. That is my request.

श्री मूल चन्द डागा (पाली) : सभापति महोदय, मैं आपको धन्यवाद देता हूँ कि आपने मुझे बोलने का अवसर दिया है। मैं समझता हूँ कि अगर आपने बिल को पढ़ लिया होता तो आपकी बड़ी मेहरबानी होती। मेरी समझ में नहीं आ सका है कि इस बिल को लाने का उद्देश्य क्या है। आजकल ऐसी प्रवृत्ति बन गई है मन्त्रियों की कि सचिव लोग जो बता देते हैं, उसके आधार पर मन्त्री महोदय बिल ले कर सदन में आ जाते हैं। दिमाग लड़ा कर उनको सोचना तो चाहिये। स्टेटमेंट आफ आबजेक्ट्स में यह लिखा हुआ है :

“The Rubber Act, 1947, provides for the development of the rubber industry. Section 4 of the Act gives the constitution of the Rubber Board. By virtue of the provisions of clause (a) of sub-section (3) of section 4, a whole-time officer is appointed as Chairman of the Board by the Central Government”.

कहाँ से ले कर आप आए हैं इसको? स्टेटमेंट आफ आबजेक्ट्स एंड रीजंस में आपने ही लिखा है :

“the Chairman is to be appointed by the Government.”

There is no question of part-time or full time. He is simply to be appointed. It says that the Officer is being appointed Section 4 sub-clause (3) (a) does not say about any officer. Now what are the reasons for appointing the Director-General?

इसलिए बनाया जाए कि चालीस हजार का खर्चा और बढ़ जाए। एक आप एग्जीक्यूटिव डायरेक्टर लगाएंगे खर्च बोर्ड पर तो चालीस हजार का खर्चा और बढ़ जाएगा। यह आपका फाइनेंशियल मैमोरेण्डम है। इस में कहा गया है :

“According to the present scale of pay which is Rs. 2000-2250, the ex-

penditure on account of his pay and allowances as Executive Director shall be approximately be Rs. 40,000 per annum”.

अब मुझे बताइये क्या क्वालिफिकेशन्स हैं एग्जीक्यूटिव डायरेक्टर की। किसलिये ऐपाइंट करना चाहते हैं। और ऐपोइंट कब कर सकते हैं? आप सेक्शन देखें : Consultation with the Board:

“Before taking any action touching the affairs of the Board under this Act, the Central Government shall ordinarily consult the Board.”

(Interruptions)

बोर्ड की 46 बार बैठक हुई है क्या एक बार भी बोर्ड ने कहा है कि हमारा काम चेयरमैन से ठीक नहीं चल रहा है? या इसके मेम्बर्स ठीक से काम नहीं कर रहे हैं और हमारे विकास के लिये यह जरूरी है? क्या कोई ऐपा प्रस्ताव बोर्ड ने पास किया है पार्ट टाइम चेयरमैन हो, और एग्जीक्यूटिव डायरेक्टर होना चाहिये?

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

15.56 hrs.

Then, please see to the constitution of the Board. It is mentioned in the Act apart from others that the Board shall consist of:

“...three members of Parliament of whom two shall be elected by the House of the People and one by the Council of States...”

...ten members to be nominated by the Central Government, of whom two shall represent the manufacturers and four labourers...

...eight members to represent the State of Kerala, six of whom shall be persons representing the rubber producing interests, three of such six being persons representing the small growers.”

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please conclude now.

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA: Many hon. Members have spoken on so many points, which may not be that relevant. But when I am speaking on this Bill and confining myself to the Bill, you want me to conclude.

AN. HON. MEMBER: Please allow him to continue.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): He is a goal keeper who goals from that side. Please allow him... (Interruptions).

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA: There are 25 members of the Board and forty-six sittings have taken place in one year.

एक बार भी कभी यह निर्णय लिया हो और किसी ने चैलेंज किया हो कि बोर्ड की कार्यवाही ठीक नहीं चल रही है और बोर्ड को या खबर विकास के लिये एक नए अफसर की जरूरत है ?

Already there are two officers. What will be the functions of those officers? One is the Rubber Production Commissioner and the other is the Secretary. The Act says:

"The Central Government shall appoint a Rubber Production Commissioner to exercise such powers and perform such duties under the direction of the Board as may be prescribed."

What are the functions of the Rubber Production Commissioner? Rubber Production Commissioner is there, Secretary is there and you want a new man. For what purpose? What are the qualifications of that person?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: How much more time do you require?

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA: Ten minutes.

16 hrs.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Daga, if you can help it is possible. The Minister wants only ten minutes to reply.

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA: After-all, when I am talking on the Bill, how will it be possible?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Daga, the Minister says that all the points which you are going to raise, he knows them.

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA: Sir, he can understand anything. That I know. But what I am putting, let me just say. Give me time now or else I am prepared to finish it tomorrow. There is no harm.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): Sir, kindly let him finish today.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: He wants it to be continued tomorrow. Mr. Daga, I will give you some other chance. Let us complete this Bill.

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA: I don't require chance. I have my own way of dealing with things. I don't require chance.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: All right, we will continue tomorrow. Only if the House agrees, I would ask the Minister to reply. There is no question of majority or minority in this. I will ask the consent of the House and if the House agrees we will ask the Minister to reply. The Minister says he will take ten minutes, then we will take up the Bill.

SHRI NATHU RAM MIRDHA (Nagaur): We don't agree. What is the hurry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (**SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL**): Sir, this is a very simple Bill. For three days we have been sitting here. There is no hurry, but I shall have some other work in some other House. That is my difficulty.

SHRI NATHU RAM MIRDHA: We can take this up tomorrow or day after tomorrow. What is the hurry?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Agreed. Mr. Daga is supposed to have concluded his speech. The Minister will reply the next day.

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA: No, I have not concluded my speech.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: You will reply the next day. Discussion on this is over.

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA: No, I will be speaking on the Bill. I have not concluded my speech.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: How long will you take?

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA: I will take seven or eight minutes tomorrow.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: All right five minutes have been granted. Tomorrow you can continue.

16.03 hrs

DISCUSSION ON FLOOD AND DROUGHT SITUATION IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now discussion under Rule 193. Shri Harikesh Bahadur will raise a discussion on the statements made by the Minister of Irrigation and Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development in the House on 4th October, 1982 regarding flood and drought situation in various parts of the country and the steps taken by Government in that behalf.

श्री हरीकेश बहादुर (गोरखपुर): माननीय उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, यह बहुत ही दुर्भाग्य की बात है कि हमारे देश में बाढ़ और सूखे की स्थिति दोनों एक साथ अब की वार कई राज्यों में आ गई है। यद्यपि सदन में हम लोग प्रतिवर्ष बाढ़ की विभीषिका की चर्चा करते हैं और हमेशा सरकार को कुछ सुझाव देते हैं और सरकार से कुछ आश्वासन भी पाते हैं, लेकिन देखा यह जाता है कि बाढ़ की रोक थाम के लिये और सूखे को समाप्त करने के लिये कोई ऐसा ठोस कदम सरकार के द्वारा नहीं उठाया जा रहा है जिससे बाढ़ और सूखे की वर्तमान परिस्थिति पर काबू पाया जा सके। नतीजा यह होता है कि हर साल बाढ़ से भयंकर तबाही होती है और तमाम राज्यों में सूखे से भी बहुत बड़ी तबाही होती है।

मन्त्री जी ने अपने वक्तव्य में कहा था कि हमारे देश के जिन राज्यों में सूखे की स्थिति है, वह हैं पश्चिम बंगाल, उड़ीसा, उत्तर प्रदेश, बिहार, महाराष्ट्र, आंध्र प्रदेश और तमिलनाडु। साथ ही बाढ़ के बारे में वक्तव्य देते हुए दूसरे मन्त्री जी ने कहा था कि बाढ़ की स्थिति उड़ीसा, उत्तर प्रदेश, बिहार, आसाम में